

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR
6 November 1984

A victory for mapmaking

By Martin H. Miller

THE Central Intelligence Agency has stopped depicting the so-called "West Bank" as an integral part of the Kingdom of Jordan. For the first time since Jordan was evicted from the area in the war of 1976, this area, which has long been the focus of American foreign policy, is not presented in a CIA map and text as Jordan's in perpetuity.

It took almost three years of effort — articles in newspapers, many letters and phone calls and visits, and extensive help from my congressman, Rep. Michael D. Barnes (D) of Maryland — to bring this about.

The accurate map of Jordan and accompanying text are in the new edition of the CIA's annual "World Factbook," which can be bought at government bookstores or ordered from the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D.C. 20402.

The "West Bank" consists of only 2,200 square miles of land. But few areas of the world — and none so tiny — have received as much attention from presidents of the United States, our secretaries of state, national-security advisers, or directors of the CIA.

All that the agency responsible for evaluating "intelligence relating to the national security" did in depicting the area in question was to violate United States legal policy and the facts. The CIA did this at the direction of the State Department, which calls the shots for government mapmakers.

In small State Department and CIA maps, the area on the west side of the Jordan River was simply shown as Jordan. On larger maps, the area was shown by markings, color, and nomenclature as part of Jordan "occupied" by Israel.

The consequence has been that a person looking at a map of the "West Bank" has asked himself, "What business does Israel have here? This is part of Jordan." Israel is labeled a transgressor and, consciously or not,

government policymakers have been influenced in their attitude toward Israeli actions in the area.

Against such a background measures, like President Reagan's ill-fated Sept. 1, 1982, "Middle East Initiative" make sense. This called for a confederation between the "West Bank" and Jordan. The President termed the plan "the greatest foreign policy accomplishment of my administration." It was rejected by all of the proposed participants.

My campaign to make the State Department of the United States and the Central Intelligence Agency "honest" began with a letter dated Nov. 4, 1981, to Alexander Haig, then secretary of state. I asked, "Should the so-

called 'West Bank' be shown as part of Jordan in maps issued by the Department of State," and observed that "Not even the members of the Arab League recognized Jordan's sovereignty over this area."

The reply came six weeks later in a letter from Lewis M. Alexander, director of the State Department's Office of the Geographer. He conceded that only Great Britain and Pakistan had ever acknowledged Jordan's sovereignty over the area. In short, the US did not endorse Jordan's 1948 military occupation of the area. Nevertheless, even after Jordan was expelled from there in 1967, the State Department and the CIA continued to show it as Jordan's.

In 1974 at the Rabat Conference of the Arab League,

Jordan's King Hussein relinquished Jordanian claims to the area. The State Department and the CIA continued to show it as Jordan's.

Nongovernment publishers and the media followed suit. For the public, for journalists, for students, and for present and future presidents and secretaries of state — for an entire generation of Americans — the "truth" from our trusted sources from every side has been that the "West Bank" is an integral part of Jordan.

This has influenced our perceptions of "right and wrong" in judging the area and what the US should do about it.

The work to get the State Department to cease the dissemination of erroneous and misleading data about Jordan and the "West Bank" has brought results, although much remains to be done. The CIA and 10 other mapmaking agencies were told in a State Department directive dated Sept. 30, 1982, to make specified changes in their new maps of the Middle East. This was the first breakthrough. The accurate map and text in the CIA 1984 fact book came next.

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